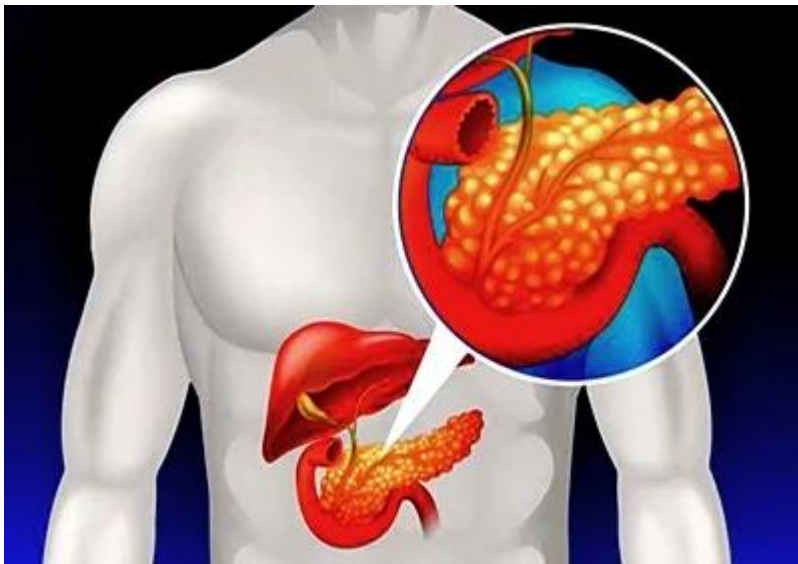




For 13.5% of people between the ages of 20 and 39 worldwide, alcohol is the cause of death. Additionally, adolescents and young adults- especially young women- are experiencing a disproportionate rise in the incidence of alcohol-associated liver disease. In this study, Canadian scientists investigated the epidemiology of alcohol-associated end-organ complications among adolescents and young adults in the general population over the previous 20 years.



About the study

In this retrospective, population-based cohort analysis, the authors used routinely gathered emergency department or inpatient visits for end-organ alcohol-related damage by adolescents and young adults from 2003 to 2021.

The data were categorized by organ: (1) pancreas (alcohol-associated acute and chronic pancreatitis); (2) liver (alcohol-associated liver disease, alcohol-associated hepatitis, alcohol-associated cirrhosis); and (3) other organs (stomach, adrenal glands, nervous system, muscles, and heart). The involved participants were between 13 and 39 years old. Age-adjusted annual incidence rates of alcohol-related encounters were calculated per 100,000 person-years and stratified by organ type and sex.

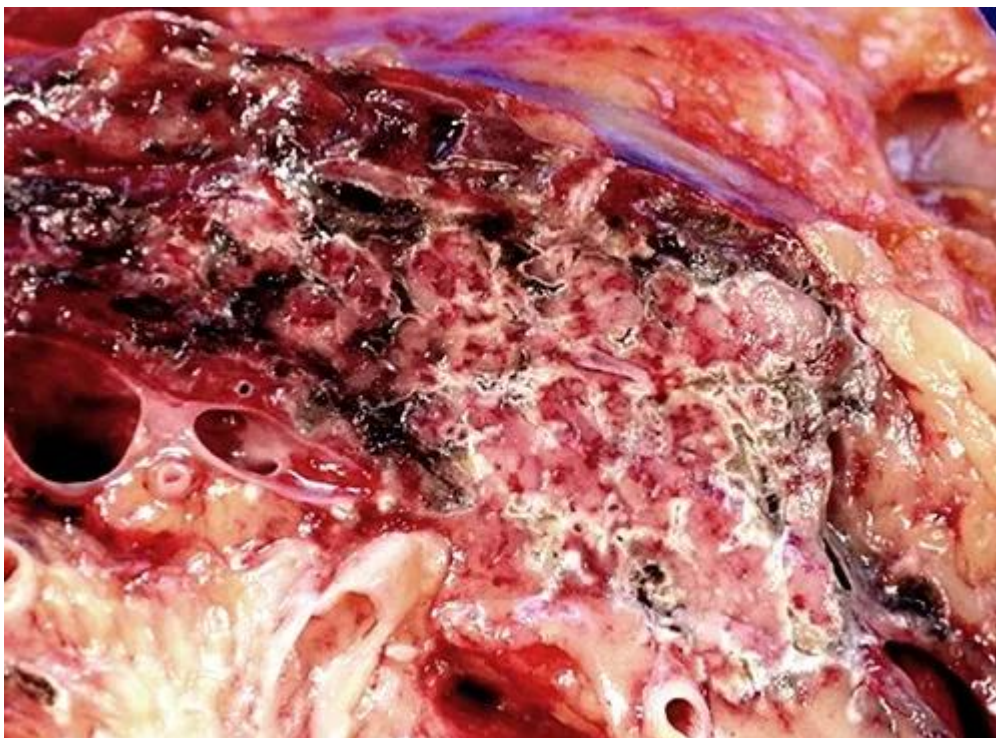


Alcohol-associated end-organ complications among adolescents and young adults | 2

Results

In total, 11,508 adolescents and young adults with an alcohol-related incident end-organ complications were identified. Most (64%) were males with a median age of 28 (22-34) years.

Alcohol-associated pancreatic complications were more frequent than liver-related complications (29% versus 19%, respectively). The most frequent pancreatic complication was acute pancreatitis (92%). Those with pancreatic complications were more likely to be male (71%), reside in urban locations (88%), and require hospitalization (77%) than those with other end-organ complications.



Acute necrotizing pancreatitis

The incidence of pancreatitis increased by 7% per year in males and 12% per year in females, whereas liver-related complications increased by 6% per year in males and 9% per year in females. In other organs, the incidence of end-organ alcohol damage decreased by 1% per year in males but increased by 2% per year in females.



Conclusion

This study, which investigated alcohol-associated end-organ complications among adolescents and young adults, showed that alcohol-associated gastrointestinal complications are increasing at rates much higher than in other organ systems. Additionally, males were most affected by acute pancreatitis, but the rates of alcohol-associated pancreatitis and alcohol-associated liver disease were higher in young females than young males.

The authors emphasized that, to their knowledge, this is the first study that describes the epidemiology of alcohol-associated pancreatitis among adolescents and young adults. They concluded that these results highlight that gastroenterologists' care is crucial for people with alcohol use disorder.

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Journal Reference

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